

## Conquering the World

Whenever a country's citizens fight among themselves, the country becomes weak. Soldiers die in battle, people neglect their farming, and they are working against each other instead of working together. A group of people from the north, the Macedonians, took advantage of the confusion and turmoil in Greece after the Peloponnesian War. King Philip II ruled the Macedonians. Eying the weakness of their Greek neighbor, Philip and his troops conquered all of Greece by 338 B.C. Not long after this, Philip died and his young son, Alexander, became king of Macedonia. Alexander's goal was to complete his dad's plan to conquer the Persian Empire.

Thanks to his famous teacher, Aristotle, Alexander loved Greek culture. Wherever he traveled, he spread Greek ideas to those he conquered. Historians call this period the Hellenistic Era—a time when many people imitated the Greeks. Hellenistic means “Greek-like.”

Grecian-style buildings were popular, as was Greek literature. Alexander also enjoyed learning about the different cultures of the people he conquered. He learned astronomy while in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). In Egypt, he traveled the Nile River to Ethiopia exploring the land. Alexander encouraged his soldiers to

marry women of the different civilizations they conquered. He allowed these areas to rule themselves and gave equal rights to all who became part of his empire. Alexander also built museums to house the many artifacts he collected.

Alexander sounds like a pretty good guy, right? Actually, he was ruthless. Here's an example. When the people of Thebes thought Alexander was too young and inexperienced, they rose up against him. Alexander responded swiftly. He burned the city to the ground as a warning to any other city that might act against him. His army killed 6,000 people and sold 30,000 more into slavery. They supposedly left only one house standing—that of a famous poet, Pindar.

Alexander's troops conquered Egypt, Persia and crossed through the desert in what is now southern Iran. Before he died, Alexander extended his empire as far east as India. He ruled the known world and once wept because there were “no more worlds to conquer.” Alexander the Great founded nearly 70 cities, including a city he named after his horse, Bucephalus. Alexander died when he was 32 years old, not in battle but in his bed with fever.

How did he accomplish so much in such a short time? Keep reading to learn more!

### Connections

## Discovery in Greece: Oldest Wall on Earth?

Archeologists are thrilled about a recent discovery in Greece. Scientists studying in a famous cave think they have found the oldest-known structure ever created by man. The structure is a stone wall, believed to be more than 23,000 years old.

It was discovered in Greece's famous Theopetra cave. The wall blocks about two-thirds of the entrance to the cave. The scientists believe that early humans built it in order to block out harsh weather conditions, like powerful rain, wind and ice.

Nikolaos Zacharias is a scientist at the University of Peloponnese in Greece. He is the director of a science called archaeometry. Zacharias uses scientific

techniques such as radiocarbon dating to carefully study and analyze ancient human materials, like the wall found in the cave.

In this case, Zacharias used an advanced scientific method called optical dating to determine the age of the structure. By studying the quartz grains inside the stones used to build the wall as well as surrounding soil and sediment, Zacharias and his team of scientists were able to determine the age of the wall.

The date that Zacharias and his team were able to find matches one of the coldest periods of the latest ice age. For this reason, they believe the wall was built as a means of shelter to block out the harsh weather conditions of a chilly time.



The cave where the wall was discovered is located in Meteora, Greece.



# ALEXANDER THE GREAT



## Alexander's First Victory

King Philip II of Macedonia and Queen Olympias had their son, Alexander, in 356 B.C. A story tells that on the day of his birth, two of Zeus' eagles perched on the roof of the palace. Other legends tell of a star falling to the Earth and of a lightning strike at a far-away Asian temple. Some say these were signs that this child would be important one day.

Alexander learned to play the lyre and flute and liked swimming, racing, hunting and horseback riding. He was a great athlete and was asked to compete in the Olympic Games. Alexander said if he could compete against kings in the Olympic Games, he would do so. Otherwise, he wasn't interested.

When Alexander was 16 years old, his father left him in charge of Macedonia while Philip went to Byzantium to fight in a battle. The people of Macedonia decided to rebel since Alexander was

just a teenager. Bad idea! Alexander led the army and quickly got the rebels under control. He also renamed the city Alexandroupolis in his own honor. Alexander named many cities after himself.

## Horsing Around

Young Alexander noticed that none of his father's soldiers could tame a black colt. At 12 years old, Alexander said he could tame the horse, and that his father's soldiers lacked skill and courage. His father thought this might be a good lesson for his son, because Alexander sounded conceited and had insulted the soldiers. If Alexander could train the wild horse, King Philip said he would give him the colt. If he failed, Alexander would have to pay the horse dealer for the black colt with his own money. Speaking kindly, Alexander first turned the horse to face a different direction. He had noticed the horse was afraid of its shadow. Alexander tamed the horse, and his father kept his promise. King Philip was very proud of his son. Alexander named his horse Bucephalus. Bucephalus accompanied him into many battles and traveled as far as India. When the horse died, Alexander named a city after him.

## The Gordian Knot

In the city of Gordium, a legend said that anyone who came to town and solved the puzzle of their famed knot would rule the entire world. The story told of an ox cart that had an extremely difficult and complicated knot, which had been made to honor the chief god, Zeus. The ends of the knot were hidden within the knot itself, so no one could figure out how to untie it. In 333 B.C., 23-year-old Alexander decided he would do his best to solve the puzzle. After about

two hours, he took out his long sword and cut the knot open, revealing the hidden ends of the rope. Later that evening, a storm pounded the city of Gordium. The townspeople said it was a sign from Zeus. They said Zeus was pleased with the way Alexander had solved the puzzle of the Gordian knot, something no other had been able to do. (Did Alexander cheat? Did anyone say you had to untie the knot? What do you think?)

## A Prophecy Fulfilled?

Remember oracles, the places people went to ask the gods for advice? Some say Alexander traveled to the Oracle of Delphi and found the priestess wasn't taking questions that day. Alexander was angry and demanded that the priestess answer his question. The priestess yelled, "My son, you are invincible!" Alexander took this response as praise and departed to conquer Asia.

In only 11 years, Alexander conquered all the lands from Egypt to India. But at the Indus River, Alexander's exhausted soldiers refused to go any further. Alexander was forced to give up and begin the long march back home.

## Alexander's Reign Ends

The empire of Alexander the Great soon unraveled after Alexander died. Alexander didn't have any sons but said on his deathbed that he wanted to leave his empire "to the strongest." His generals started to argue among themselves as to who should rule. Eventually, the three strongest generals divided the empire into three parts.

## Alexander's Legacy

A legacy is something you leave behind after you die. It doesn't have to be an object; it can be things like knowledge or traditions. Alexander was an accomplished soldier. He conquered much of the known world and established one of the world's most powerful empires. However, Alexander's greatest legacy was his sharing of Greek culture. His love of the culture caused him to share the customs, language, writing, literature and ideas of the Greeks with all he met. The world would be a very different place today if it hadn't been for Alexander the Great.



## Aristotle

## World Biography

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. in Stagira, Macedonia. Aristotle's family believed education was important. His father was the king's physician. Aristotle probably would have become a doctor too, if his father hadn't died when Aristotle was only 10 years old. Aristotle's mother also died while he was young.

When he was a teenager, Aristotle went to Athens and became a pupil of one of the best thinkers of the time, Plato. He stayed at Plato's academy for 20 years. Plato was so impressed with Aristotle's intelligence that he called him "nous," meaning "the mind." When Plato died, Aristotle didn't get the job as lead teacher at the academy, so he left Athens.

Aristotle eventually returned to Macedonia, where he tutored King Philip's son, Alexander. For seven years, Aristotle worked with Alexander. He taught him much about Greek culture, including the writings of Homer. Aristotle even copied by hand a special volume of Homer's "Iliad" for Alexander to study.

Aristotle later went back to Athens and opened his own school called the Lyceum. He became one of the most famous thinkers of ancient Greece. A philosopher, scientist and teacher, Aristotle is often called the father of science. He was interested in anatomy, astronomy, geography, meteorology, zoology and much more. There is even a crater on our moon named after him—the Aristoteles crater. Aristotle died in 322 B.C.

Some great quotes from Aristotle:

- "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is a habit."
- "We think in pictures. If you wish to change what you think, change the picture."
- "Education is the best provision for the journey to old age."
- "Happiness depends upon ourselves."



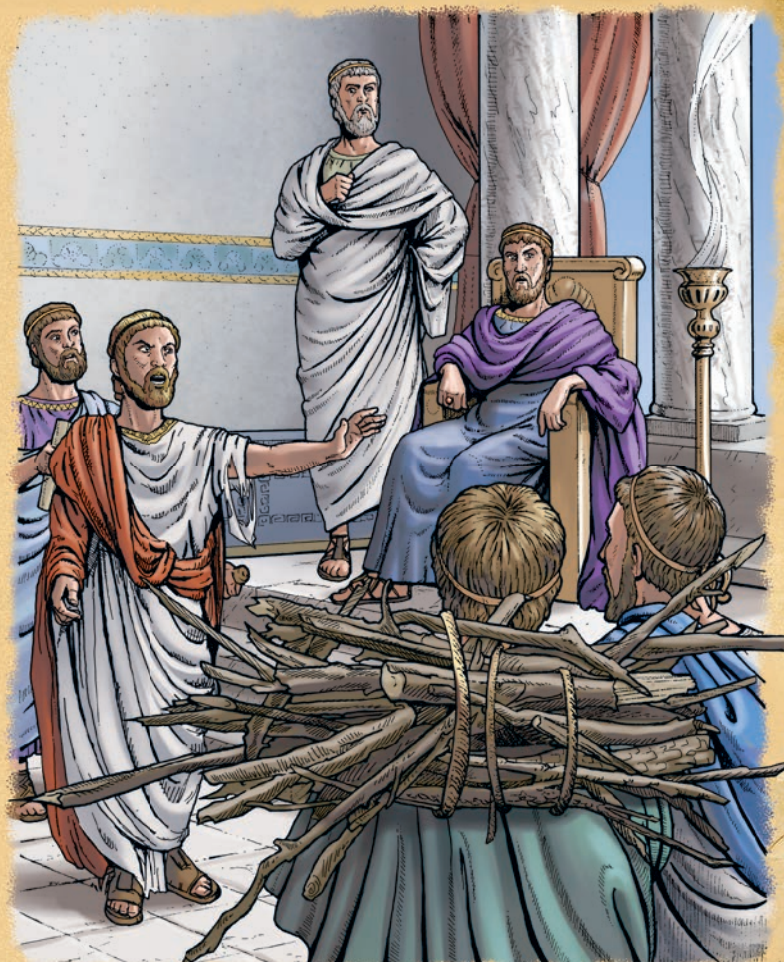
## Culture

### The Wisdom of the Woodcutter

A woodcutter finished chopping down trees to sell in the market and walked out of the forest with his load of branches. Because some of the branches were very long, he called, "Look out!" as he carried the branches to town. A very rich man heard "Look out!" as he stepped into the road. But the man refused to get out of the way of the woodcutter's branches. The branches ripped his clothes. The rich man was angry and decided to take the woodcutter to court to get him to pay for new clothes.

In court, the woodcutter didn't speak, even when the judge asked him to tell his side of the story. Since the judge didn't know the woodcutter, he decided that the woodcutter must be mute, or unable to speak. The judge turned to the wealthy man and asked why he'd brought such a man to court. The wealthy man said the woodcutter was not mute, just too arrogant to speak to the court. The judge asked, "Why do you say that?" The wealthy man said to the judge, "Because he yelled, 'Look out!' as he brought his tree limbs to market."

The judge looked at the rich man and said, "If the woodcutter told you to get out of the way, why didn't you?" The rich man had no reply. The judge ruled that the woodcutter didn't owe the man money for clothes, because the wealthy man should have heeded the woodcutter's warning.



## Macedonia

The country of Macedonia is on the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Because it doesn't touch any bodies of water, it is a landlocked country. The highest peak is Golem Korab, which stands at 9,396 feet. There is snow on this peak and other mountains most of the year.

The largest and most important river in Macedonia is the Vardar. The people of Macedonia have also created a number of artificial lakes, the largest being Mavrovo. Whitewater kayaking is a favorite pastime in the country today.

In 1929, Macedonia became part of the Balkan country Yugoslavia. In 1993, Macedonia

broke from Yugoslavia to form the Republic of Macedonia. For a while there was great tension and many deaths in the region as Yugoslavia tried to keep control of Macedonia and other break-away regions.

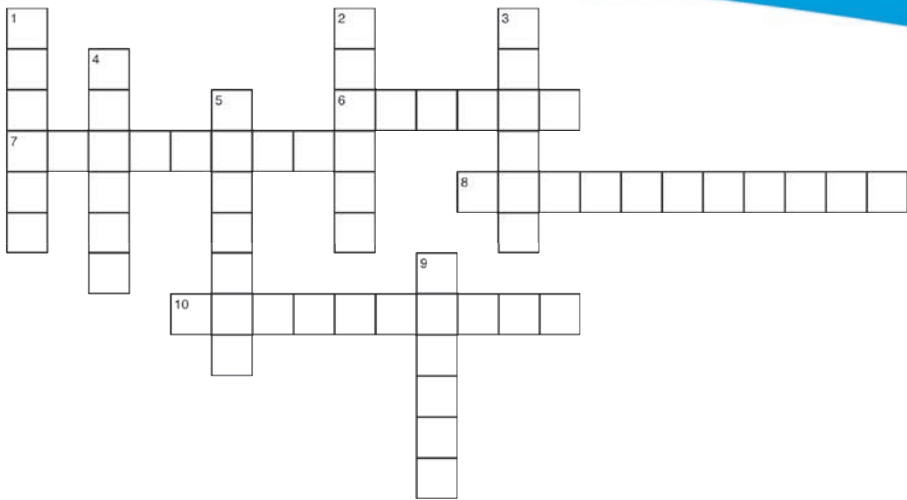
Today, Macedonia borders Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo and Greece. There is a dispute with Greece over the name "Macedonia" because Greece's northern section has the same name. Also, many people of northern Greece have ties with the Republic of Macedonia, and the Greek government is worried that the Republic will try to take over the Greek area known as Macedonia.

## World Regions





Name \_\_\_\_\_



- ACROSS**
- 6. a moon feature named for Aristotle.
  - 7. Alexander's teacher
  - 8. word meaning "Greek-like"
  - 10. Alexander's horse
- DOWN**
- 1. something you leave behind after you die
  - 2. school started by Aristotle
  - 3. city burned to the ground by Alexander
  - 4. first name of Alexander's father
  - 5. city with a "knotty" puzzle
  - 9. largest river in the Republic of Macedonia



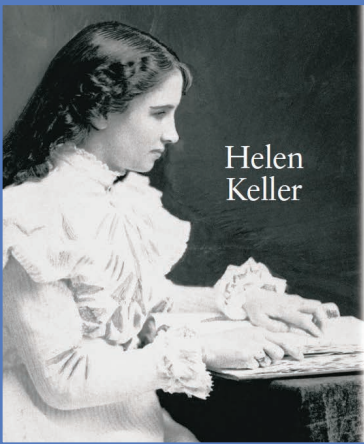
As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

# Alexander's Empire

- 1. Near what Macedonian city did Alexander's journey begin?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Name two battles shown on the map.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. On what peninsula is the city of Gordium located?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Did Alexander the Great march on Athens and Sparta?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. On what river is the city of Memphis, Egypt, located?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Mapping & Charting

- 6. Near what river is the city of Arbela located?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7. What sea borders Media?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Did Alexander and his troops cross the Euphrates River?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9. What desert did Alexander and his troops cross?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Why do you think the empire would have been hard to control?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Could only see possibilities.

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In 1831, archaeologists found a mosaic in a home among the ruins of Pompeii. It is a beautiful mosaic of Alexander the Great and his horse, Bucephalus. It dates back to 80 B.C. A mosaic is a picture made of cut glass pieces. It took about 1.5 million colored glass tiles to make this beautiful piece. Pretend you are Alexander the Great and write a "day in your life" diary entry about Bucephalus or anything else you've learned about Alexander. Include at least four facts you learned this week. Remember to check your writing for proper spelling, punctuation and grammar.

**Let's Write**